UNITED NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/RES/51/226
25 April 1997

Fifty-first session
Agenda item 120

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[on the report of the Fifth Committee (A/51/643/Add.2)]

51/226. Human resources management

The General Assembly,

Recalling Articles 8, 97, 100 and 101 of the Charter of the United Nations,

Reaffirming its resolutions 47/226 of 8 April 1993 and 49/222 A and B of 23 December 1994 and 20 July 1995, as well as its other relevant resolutions and decisions,

Bearing in mind the views expressed by Member States on human resources management questions in the Fifth Committee during the fifty-first session of the General Assembly,[1]

Having considered the relevant reports on human resources management questions submitted by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session,[2]

Having considered also the relevant reports of the Joint Inspection Unit,[3]

---

[1] See Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Fifth Committee, 7th, 9th-11th, 13th, 14th, 16th, 21st, 23rd, 25th, 26th, 30th, 31st, 34th, 37th, 46th, 49th-51st and 55th meetings (A/C.5/51/SR.7, 9-11, 13, 14, 16, 21, 23, 25, 26, 30, 31, 34, 37, 46, 49-51 and 55), and corrigendum.

[2] A/51/304 and Corr.1; A/51/421 and Corr.1 and 2; A/C.5/49/63; A/C.5/49/64; A/C.5/50/64; A/C.5/51/1; A/C.5/51/6; and A/C.5/51/34.

[3] A/51/656, annex and A/51/705, annex.

Having heard the views expressed by the staff representative in the Fifth Committee in accordance with General Assembly resolution 35/213 of 17 December 1980,[4]

Reaffirming that the staff of the Organization is an invaluable asset of the United Nations, and commending its contribution to furthering the purposes and principles of the United Nations,

Paying tribute to the memory of all staff members who have lost their lives in the service of the Organization,

1. Reiterates its full support for the Secretary-General as the chief administrative officer of the Organization, and underlines its full respect for his prerogatives and responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations;

2. Reaffirms its support for the integrity and independence of the international civil service, and notes the efforts of the Secretary-General to preserve these;

I. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL'S STRATEGY FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES OF THE ORGANIZATION

Recalling the Secretary-General's strategy for the management of the human resources of the Organization,[5]

Welcoming the adoption by the Secretary-General of the concept of an integrated approach to human resources planning and management, as reflected in his strategy,

Reaffirming the importance of the staff-management consultative process to the functioning and activities of the Secretariat,

1. Notes the steps taken to implement a number of elements of the strategy for the management of the human resources of the Organization as set out in the report of the Secretary-General;[6]

2. Regrets with deep concern that further progress in the implementation of the adopted strategy has not been achieved, and urges the Secretary-General to take the necessary action to ensure its full implementation and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session;

3. Regrets the unsuccessful efforts to develop a management environment and culture in the Organization that enables staff members to contribute their maximum potential, effectiveness and efficiency;

4. Calls upon the Secretary-General to pursue the full implementation of his strategy as soon as possible, bearing in mind the provisions of the present resolution;

---

[4] See Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Fifth Committee, 51st meeting (A/C.5/51/SR.51), and corrigendum.

[5] See A/C.5/49/5.

[6] See A/C.5/51/1.

5. Notes, in this connection, the phasing-in of performance management, including the introduction in 1996 of a new performance appraisal system;

II. ROLE OF THE OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT OF THE SECRETARIAT

Reaffirming its resolution 48/218 A of 23 December 1993, in particular the request therein for a mechanism ensuring that programme managers are accountable for the effective management of the human resources allocated to them,

Noting with appreciation that the Joint Inspection Unit in its report of 5 November 1996[7] has dealt with recruitment, placement and promotion policies in a comprehensive manner,

Reiterating the authority and responsibility of the Office of Human Resources Management of the Secretariat to enforce recruitment, placement and promotion policies throughout the Secretariat,

Taking note of the reports of the Secretary-General on staff representational activities,[8]

1. Recognizes the role of the Office of Human Resources Management as the primary representative of the Secretary-General in establishing human resources policies and guidelines, and strongly requests the Secretary-General to maintain its central policy authority;

2. Requests the Secretary-General to enhance managerial accountability with respect to human resources management decisions, including imposing sanctions in cases of demonstrated mismanagement of staff and wilful neglect of or disregard for established rules and procedures, while safeguarding the due process rights of all staff members, including managers;

3. Also requests the Secretary-General to issue specific administrative instructions to establish clearly the responsibility and accountability of programme managers for proper use of human resources, as well as sanctions in accordance with staff rule 112.3 for any financial loss suffered by the United Nations as a result of gross negligence, including improper motivation, wilful violation of or reckless disregard for the Staff Regulations and Rules and established policies regulating recruitment, placement and promotion;

4. Deplores the high number of exceptions to the established procedures for the recruitment, placement and promotion of staff, in particular in the Office of Human Resources Management;

5. Requests the Secretary-General to announce all vacancies so as to give equal opportunity to all qualified staff and to encourage mobility, it being understood that the discretionary power of the Secretary-General of appointment and promotion outside the established procedures should be limited to his Executive Office and the under-secretary-general and assistant secretary-general levels, as well as special envoys at all levels;

---

[7] A/51/656, annex.

[8] A/C.5/49/63, A/C.5/49/64, A/C.5/50/64 and A/C.5/51/6.

6. Welcomes the intention of the Secretary-General to streamline administrative procedures and eliminate duplication, in relation to human resources management, through delegation of authority to programme managers, and requests him to ensure, before delegating such authority, that well-designed mechanisms of accountability, including the necessary internal monitoring and control procedures, as well as training, are put in place, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session;

7. Requests the Secretary-General to expedite the simplification and streamlining of all personnel rules and procedures in order to make them transparent and easier to apply, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session;

8. Reaffirms the need for the Secretary-General to use, to the fullest extent possible, the staff-management consultative mechanisms set out in staff rule 108.2 and to strengthen the staff-management dialogue in the United Nations and all its funds and programmes, and requests him to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session;

9. Requests the Secretary-General to ensure in his proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 provision to the Office of Human Resources Management of the level of resources commensurate with the mandate set out above;

10. Recalls that the functions of staff representatives are official;

11. Also recalls that elected staff representatives are staff members of the United Nations;

12. Recognizes the fact that staff representatives are entitled to an opportunity for career advancement, decides that the period of their continuous release shall not exceed four years, and also decides to limit such release to elected staff representatives only, on either a full-time or a part-time basis;

13. Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly a report on the practice of Member States relative to the financing of national staff representation and on the proportion of staff representation;

III. HUMAN RESOURCES PLANNING, RECRUITMENT, STATUS OF WOMEN AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Recalling Articles 8 and 101 of the Charter of the United Nations,

A. Human resources planning

Emphasizing the importance of human resources planning to both recruitment and career development,

1. Takes note of the preliminary work in human resources planning, especially in the projection of recruitment needs at the entry level from 1997 to 2001, and requests that these activities be continued and expanded;

2. Requests the Secretary-General, in accordance with relevant staff regulations and rules, to use, to the fullest extent possible, existing mechanisms, such as agreed termination or granting leave without pay, to create opportunities for upward mobility for existing staff and for recruiting new staff;

B. Recruitment

Stressing the vital importance of the recruitment of new staff to meet the needs of the Organization,

1. Reaffirms that no post should be considered the exclusive preserve of any Member State or group of States, including at the highest level;

2. Recognizes that the system of desirable ranges is the mechanism for the recruitment of staff in posts subject to geographical distribution, in accordance with Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations;

3. Requests the Secretary-General to take every available measure to ensure, at the senior and policy-making levels of the Secretariat, the equitable representation of Member States, in particular of developing countries and Member States with inadequate representation at those levels, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, and to include relevant information thereon in future reports on the composition of the Secretariat;

4. Also requests the Secretary-General, in this regard, to exercise flexibility in the application of desirable ranges in individual recruitment cases, bearing in mind all parts of the present resolution;

5. Further requests the Secretary-General to ensure that the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity serve as the primary criteria in the recruitment of staff;

6. Requests the Secretary-General, while ensuring that the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity serve as the primary criteria in the recruitment of staff, to ensure also that the search for and the selection of candidates are conducted in accordance with the guiding principles of achieving equitable geographical distribution and providing equal opportunity for men and women to participate in any capacity and under conditions of equality in the work of the Secretariat;

7. Reaffirms that secondment from government service is consistent with Articles 100 and 101 of the Charter and beneficial to both the Organization and Member States, and urges the Secretary-General to pursue this practice on a wider scale, as appropriate;

8. Notes the efforts of the Secretary-General to conduct a targeted search for candidates from Member States that are unrepresented or under-represented and below the mid-point of their desirable ranges, and requests that he continue to expand these efforts;

9. Requests the Secretary-General to restrict the practice of making temporary appointments against regular budget posts or extrabudgetary posts of one year or more to temporary needs, for example, replacement of staff on field mission assignment and authorized leave;

10. Also requests the Secretary-General to take effective measures to prevent the placement of staff members against higher-level unencumbered posts for periods longer than three months, and further requests the Secretary-General to issue vacancy announcements within a three-month period;

11. Further requests the Secretary-General to instruct all programme managers to inform the Office of Human Resources Management of all vacancies immediately and of all foreseen vacancies six months before the posts become vacant;

12. Notes that the posts subject to the desirable range formula are limited to the current level of 2,700 posts;

13. Requests that the Secretary-General not include staff members recruited against support account posts in the desirable range calculation;

14. Also requests the Secretary-General to continue to apply the requirements of Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter to recruit staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible to all posts outside the desirable ranges;

15. Reaffirms the policy of the Secretary-General that appointment to P-1 and P-2 posts and to posts requiring special language competence shall be made exclusively through competitive examinations and that appointment to posts at the P-3 level shall normally be made through competitive examinations;

16. Requests the Secretary-General to continue to hold national competitive examinations for posts at the P-2 and P-3 levels as a useful tool for selecting the best qualified candidates from inadequately represented Member States; special attention should be paid to the prospects of staff for promotion to the P-3 level and to the need to conduct such examinations with maximum efficiency and economy;

17. Invites the Member States concerned to participate in those examinations;

18. Requests the Secretary-General not to decrease the proportion of entrance-level posts at the P-1 to P-3 levels for budgetary purposes;

19. Also requests the Secretary-General, notwithstanding the provisions of section V of the present resolution, to offer or to continue to offer probationary appointments to all staff members who have passed a competitive recruitment examination and to consider all such staff members for conversion to permanent appointment after completion of the period of probationary service;

20. Further requests the Secretary-General, in the case of staff recruited through competitive examinations, to ensure that only those who meet the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity established in the Charter are granted permanent appointments;

21. Requests the Secretary-General to complete the realignment with the national competitive examination of the competitive examination for promotion to the Professional category of staff members from other categories, in particular regarding academic qualifications;

22. Also requests the Secretary-General to make proposals on the introduction of a probationary period for successful candidates in the competitive examinations for promotion to the Professional category of staff members from other categories;

23. Further requests the Secretary-General to report on the question of geographical imbalance resulting from promotions, through the competitive examination for promotion to the Professional category of staff members from other categories, to posts subject to geographical distribution;

24. Urges the Secretary-General to take all necessary measures, including instructions to department heads, as needed, to place all successful candidates from the national competitive examinations within one year, subject to the availability of posts;

25. Requests the Secretary-General to accord priority consideration to successful candidates from the national competitive examinations who have not been placed within one year for all other vacancies, including those of short duration;

26. Also requests the Secretary-General to extend to consultants and to personnel provided on a non-reimbursable basis the current practice of barring interns from applying for or being appointed to posts in the Secretariat for a period of six months after the end of their internships, and decides that persons on short-term appointments filling regular budget posts or extrabudgetary posts of one year or more cannot apply for or be appointed to their current post within six months of the end of their current service;

27. Further requests the Secretary-General to ensure that persons serving in peacekeeping or other field missions become eligible for consideration for internal vacancies in the Secretariat after having served for at least twelve months; should they be considered for appointment, established recruitment criteria and relevant rules shall apply;

28. Requests the Secretary-General to resume normal recruitment activities at all levels as soon as possible;

C. Status of women in the Secretariat

Reaffirming that the Fifth Committee is the appropriate Main Committee of the General Assembly entrusted with responsibility for administrative, budgetary and human resources management matters, including, in this context, the question of the representation of women in the Secretariat,

Welcoming the achievement of the goal of a 35 per cent overall participation rate of women in posts subject to geographical distribution,

Noting with concern that the goal set in its resolution 45/239 C of 21 December 1990 of a 25 per cent participation rate of women in posts at the D-1 level and above by 1995 is still far from being achieved,

Recalling its resolution 51/67 of 12 December 1996, including the reaffirmation of the goal of a 50/50 gender distribution by the year 2000,

Concerned that this goal may not be met, especially at the policy-making and decision-making levels of D-1 and above,

Noting that the overall percentage of representation of women in all Professional posts was 33.66 as at 31 December 1996,

Reaffirming that the Secretary-General, in his efforts to achieve this goal, should take into account the principle that the paramount consideration shall be the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity, with full respect for the principle of equitable geographical distribution,

1. Urges the Secretary-General fully to implement and monitor the strategic plan of action for the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (1995-2000);[9]

2. Requests the Secretary-General to continue his work to create a gender-sensitive work environment, through the implementation of all

---

[9] A/49/587 and Corr.1, sect. IV.

appropriate human resources management policies and procedures, ensuring that managers are evaluated on their activities in this regard in the context of the performance appraisal system;

3. Also requests the Secretary-General to develop a family leave programme for United Nations staff without creating supplementary leave entitlements, and to report thereon to the General Assembly as soon as possible;

4. Decides to consider, in the context of its consideration of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999, the structure and source of funding for the Focal Point for Women, and requests the Secretary-General to make proposals in this regard with a view to ensuring the provision of an adequate level of resources commensurate with its mandate;

5. Requests the Secretary-General to take appropriate measures, as soon as possible, to allow the mandate of the Focal Point for Women to be fulfilled;

6. Encourages the Secretary-General, consistent with Article 101 of the Charter of the United Nations, to appoint more women at the D-1 level and above so as to reduce the gender gap and to reach the mandated General Assembly target of 25 per cent women in senior decision-making-level positions as soon as possible;

7. Urges the Secretary-General, consistent with Article 101 of the Charter, to increase the number of women employed in the Secretariat from developing countries, in particular those which are unrepresented or under-represented and from countries that have a low representation of women, including countries with economies in transition;

8. Strongly encourages Member States to support the efforts of the United Nations and the specialized agencies to increase the percentage of women in Professional posts, especially at the D-1 level and above, by identifying and regularly presenting more women candidates and by encouraging women to apply for posts in the Secretariat of the United Nations and the specialized agencies;

D. Career development

Recognizing that career development is an indispensable part of effective human resources management,

Noting with concern the absence of progress in developing a fully integrated career development system,

1. Regrets that the Secretary-General has not yet established a career development policy in the Secretariat, and requests him to establish such a policy as soon as possible and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session;

2. Requests the Secretary-General to meet the goals and objectives set by the General Assembly in various resolutions by establishing, as a matter of priority, a comprehensive career development and promotion system;

3. Also requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session on how linguistic qualifications are taken into account in the performance appraisal system and the recruitment and promotion policy, including for language staff;

4. Further requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly on the feasibility of holding the national competitive examinations in the six official languages, without prejudice to the mandatory knowledge of English and French as working languages;

5. Requests the Secretary-General to make proposals aimed at ensuring that nationals of Member States whose mother tongue is not an official or working language of the United Nations are not placed at a disadvantage when taking the national competitive examinations;

6. Also requests the Secretary-General to pursue the development and implementation of the managed reassignment programmes for entry-level and other staff as outlined in his report on the implementation of his strategy,[10] and to budget the required posts accordingly;

7. Notes that only modest progress has been made towards achieving greater staff mobility for internationally recruited staff as called for in the strategy, and reiterates the importance of making substantive progress towards that objective;

8. Regrets that the report on mobility requested in section V, paragraph 2, of resolution 49/222 A has not yet been submitted to the General Assembly, and requests the Secretary-General to submit that report to the Assembly at its fifty-third session;

9. Notes with concern the fact that delays in completion of performance appraisal reports have an adverse effect on staff members being considered by the appointment and promotion bodies, and requests the Secretary-General to take steps to ensure that the managers preparing these reports are held accountable for any such delays;

10. Requests that, to the extent possible for a fair evaluation of staff members, the recruitment and promotion procedure not be postponed to the detriment of staff members for want of performance appraisal reports;

11. Requests the Secretary-General to utilize the performance appraisal system to foster staff-management dialogue, including the identification of staff development and career opportunities, and to report to the General Assembly at its resumed fifty-first session on the findings of the review of the first cycle of the performance appraisal system;

12. Stresses the fact that the new performance appraisal system is only one of the elements of a comprehensive career development plan in the Secretariat;

13. Notes with appreciation the strengthened training programmes, inter alia, people management training, upgrading of substantive skills, information technology, communications and training in all six official languages on an equal basis, and requests the Secretary-General to continue to invest in the Organization's future capacity by sustaining and expanding these programmes in order to meet organizational needs and individual career development aspirations;

14. Welcomes the intention of the Secretary-General to strengthen further the professional training of the staff, so as to foster management capacity and to ensure that staff continue to receive necessary refresher training over the course of their careers;

---

[10] A/C.5/51/1, paras. 29-31.

IV. REDEPLOYMENT

1. Notes the impact of the economy measures on the personnel policies of the Organization;

2. Recognizes the need to maintain an adequate environment in the Secretariat and to sustain the morale of staff members;

3. Reiterates its request contained in paragraph 12 of its resolution 51/221 B of 18 December 1996, and decides to consider the report on the situation of staff members on the redeployment list as a matter of priority during the next part of its resumed fifty-first session;

4. Recognizes that measures related to personnel matters invoked in order to obtain savings should not entail changes in the Staff Regulations and Rules without the prior approval of the General Assembly;

V. RATIO BETWEEN CAREER AND FIXED-TERM APPOINTMENTS

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on the ratio between career and fixed-term appointments,[11]

1. Underlines the importance of the concept of career service for staff members performing continuing core functions;

2. Requests the Secretary-General to make efforts to achieve the level of 70 per cent of permanent appointments in posts subject to geographical distribution and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session;

3. Decides that five years of continuing service as stipulated in its resolution 37/126 of 17 December 1982 do not confer the automatic right to a permanent appointment, and also decides that other considerations, such as outstanding performance, the operational realities of the organizations and the core functions of the post, should be duly taken into account;

4. Endorses in principle the introduction of a dual-track system of career and non-career appointments, and requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session detailed proposals for the implementation of that system, including a definition of continuing core functions with a full explanation of the manner in which such a definition would be applied and the text of any necessary amendments to the Staff Regulations and Rules that would be required in order to implement the new system;

---

[11] A/C.5/51/34.

VI. CONSULTANTS

Having considered the summary of the principal findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Board of Auditors[12] and the related comments of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions,[13]

Noting with deep concern that, despite repeated recommendations by the Board, serious irregularities persist in the identification, terms of reference, hiring, remuneration and management of consultants, including lack of geographical balance,

1. Expresses its concern about the practice of using consultants to carry out functions assigned to established posts, and requests the Secretary-General to refrain from this practice;

2. Notes with concern the observations of the Board of Auditors that a number of findings warrant further investigation with a view to taking appropriate action against personnel responsible for such malpractice,[14] and requests the Secretary-General to take appropriate action in this regard and to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session;

3. Requests the Secretary-General and the executive heads of the United Nations organizations and programmes to ensure selection of consultants on a more competitive basis and to keep the instances of recourse to sole candidates to a strict minimum, each such case being formally approved at an appropriate level of authority, on an exceptional basis, prior to engagement;

4. Also requests the Secretary-General to prepare, no later than the end of 1997, comprehensive policy guidelines on the terms of reference (including objectives, targets and output delivery dates), selection, hiring and renewal of consultants and ensuring transparency and objectivity in the selection process, and to submit those guidelines to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions for review before their consideration by the General Assembly at its fifty-second session under the item entitled "Financial reports and audited financial statements, and reports of the Board of Auditors";

5. Further requests the Secretary-General to revise the assessment form on consultants to make it more detailed and more clearly indicative of the quality of the consultant's work and his or her ability to undertake future assignments;

6. Endorses the recommendations made by the Board of Auditors in its report,[15] and requests the Secretary-General to implement them;

7. Also endorses the recommendation of the Advisory Committee that the Secretariat resume the past practice of submitting, on a biennial basis and in conjunction with the report requested by the Committee on the hiring of

---

[12] A/51/283, annex.

[13] See A/51/533.

[14] Ibid., para. 31.

[15] Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 5 (A/51/5), vol. I, sect. II, paras. 155-189.

retired staff, a report on the hiring and use of consultants, following the format of past reports on the subject;[16]

VII. REPORTING TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly, under the appropriate agenda items, reports on the following questions:

(a) As soon as possible

A family leave programme for United Nations staff;

(b) At its resumed fifty-first session

The findings of the review of the first cycle of the performance appraisal system;

(c) At its fifty-second session

(i) The appropriate action taken against personnel responsible for malpractices identified by the Board of Auditors;

(ii) Comprehensive policy guidelines on consultants, to be submitted through the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions;

(d) At its fifty-third session

(i) Information on measures taken to ensure equitable representation of Member States at the senior and policy-making levels of the Secretariat, to be included in the report on the composition of the Secretariat;

(ii) The full implementation of the strategy for the management of the human resources of the Organization;

(iii) Delegation of authority;

(iv) The simplification and streamlining of all personnel rules and procedures;

(v) Staff-management consultative mechanisms;

(vi) The practices of Member States relative to national staff representation;

(vii) Proposals on the introduction of a probationary period for successful candidates in the competitive examination for promotion to the Professional category of staff members from other categories;

(viii) The question of geographical imbalance resulting from promotions of successful candidates in the competitive examination for promotion to the Professional category of staff members from other categories;

(ix) Career development policy;

---

[16] A/51/533, para. 44.

(x) Linguistic qualifications in the context of the performance appraisal system and the recruitment and promotion policy;

(xi) The feasibility of holding the national competitive examinations in the six official languages, including proposals to ensure that nationals of Member States whose mother tongue is not an official language of the United Nations are not placed at a disadvantage;

(xii) Mobility;

(xiii) The efforts made by the Secretary-General to achieve the level of 70 per cent of permanent appointments in posts subject to geographical distribution;

(xiv) Detailed proposals for the implementation of a dual-track system of career and non-career appointments;

(xv) The hiring of retirees and the hiring and use of consultants.

95th plenary meeting
3 April 1997